

Was Shakespere a Catholic?

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Was Shakespeare a Catholic?

that had gone out of vogue in England at this time except among Catholics. Shakespere's father, too, is on the list of Stratford recusants who were summoned by the court for not attending the Anglican service on Sundays. Some hold, however, that he stayed away from church because he feared a summons for debt, but documents could not legally be served on Sunday. It would appear that the burgesses of Stratford rather sympathized with the recusants, accepted almost any excuse and did not proceed against them unless compelled by governmental pressure from above. A great many of the people of Stratford and its vicinity who did their thinking for themselves still clung to the old Faith at this time. Those who were indifferent, who feared the fines that might be inflicted on them or who wanted to curry favor with the authorities, formally accepted the new form of religion. But there were few real conversions, and the feeling always existed that England would again submit to the Pope if Elizabeth should die childless, or if Mary Queen of Scots should succeed to the throne. Shakespere's immediate surroundings, however, were distinctly Catholic, for the spirit of the old religion had not died as yet in England. Indeed, it was very much alive in the central portion of the country.

Heinrich Heine, the German poet, in his work on "Shakespere's Maidens and Women" insists that if Protestantism had really come into England before the dramatist's time we would never have had Shakespere, for his genius would have been eclipsed by the shadows of Puritanism. As Heine was a German Jew his opinion is at least unbiased by national or religious prejudices. Besides he knew his Shakespere and the Elizabethan period very well. He wrote:

It is lucky for us that Shakespere came just at the right time, that he was a contemporary of Elizabeth and James, while Protestantism, it is true, expressed itself in the unbridled freedom of thought which prevailed, but which had not yet entered into life or feeling, and the kingdom lighted by the last rays of setting chivalry still bloomed and gleamed in all the glory of poetry. True, the popular faith of the Middle Ages, or Catholicism, was gone as regarded doctrine, but it existed as yet with all its magic in men's hearts, and held its own in manners, customs and views. It was not till later that the Puritans succeeded in plucking away flower by flower, and utterly rooting up the religion of the past, and spreading over all the land, as with a gray canopy, that dreary sadness which since then, dispirited and debilitated, has diluted itself to a lukewarm, whining drowsy pietism.

Curiously enough Carlyle, though he thoroughly detested Heine, in his lecture on "The Hero as Poet," says nearly the same thing as his German contemporary:

In some sense it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan era with its Shakespere, as the outcome and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's song, had produced this practical life which Shakespere was to sing. For religion then, as it now and always is, was the soul of practice; the primary vital fact in men's life. And remark here, as rather curious, that Middle-Age Catholicism was abolished, so far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it, before Shakespere, the noblest product of it, made his appearance. He did make his appearance nevertheless. Nature at her own time with Catholicism or what else might be necessary, sent him forth; taking small thought of Acts of Parliament. King-Henrys, Queen-Elizabeths go their way; and Nature, too, goes hers.

It is sometimes said, however, that there can be no question of Shakespere's being a Catholic for he was married, baptized, and buried, in the Anglican Church.

But these facts have in themselves no such significance as they would possess at the present time. There was no way of having the birth of a child properly registered then in England except by having it baptized in the Church by Law Established. As the Sacrament of Baptism can be validly administered by any one who has the intention, and as the failure to have the child baptized in the parish church would be noted by Government inquisitors, the Catholic Church permitted these baptisms to take place. Obsequies also had to be observed according to the Anglican rite, for the only cemetery was close to the parish church. Every one had to be buried there; as had their ancestors for centuries before. Arguments, therefore, founded on these formal relations between Shakespere and the Established Church would mean nothing at all as regards his own church affiliation. As for Shakespere's marriage, in recent years the interesting suggestion has been made that the real reason for the circumstances attending the ceremony, which are supposed to carry a hint of scandal with them, is because he was originally married by a Catholic priest. As it was then very perilous for a priest to show himself in public or to perform any official church service, the marriage was of course performed secretly. Anne Hathaway's family, moreover, was Catholic by tradition and about the time of the marriage it is known that a priest, not entirely without the knowledge of the local authorities, used to say Mass privately, in the loft of one of the houses at Shottery. In "Shakespere's Town and Times," by H. Snowden Ward and Catherine Weed Ward, there is a photograph of "the roof-room," as it was called, in Shottery, in which Mass, according to tradition, was privately celebrated. This room is declared

by Major Walter to have been the scene of Shakespere's Catholic marriage.

After the lapse of some months, however, Anne Hathaway's uncles discovered that a marriage by a Catholic priest was no longer a legal marriage in England, and as the newly founded family was about to have issue, it was resolved that the lawfulness of Anne's position should not be open to question. Accordingly a formal license was taken out and the young people were married, but not in Stratford nor in Shottery, where both were well known and where a public marriage would have been the occasion of scandal. They went instead to the little hamlet of Luddington, some three miles from Stratford and were legally married there. The old church at Luddington was burned down years ago, but the registers were preserved long enough to convince Stratfordians that the tradition of the marriage at Luddington is beyond all doubt. Instead of being a reflection, therefore, on Shakespere's character and that of his wife, that Luddington marriage would indicate that Shakespere first had recourse to the services of a Catholic priest.

But if Shakespere was a Catholic should not his plays show it? Unquestionably. And I maintain they do. I know of course how easy it is to take passages here and there and by removing them from their context make Shakespere say almost anything. I know, too, that the dramatist is, and perforce must be, eminently objective. He creates characters for us and does not merely make his *dramatis personae* the stalking horses for his own thoughts. There are, however, certain ways in which a dramatist, in spite of these limitations, may disclose his own train of thought by changing the tendencies of the

stories that he takes for his plot and above all by definitely counteracting religious objections and religious prejudices that may be offensive to him. Shakespere's first important play "Romeo and Juliet," put on the stage when he was scarcely more than twenty-five, will illustrate this very well. I have always had an idea that Shakespere, like most young poets, came up to London with at least the preliminary sketches of some of his finished poems in his pocket. "Midsummer Night's Dream" is so full of the witchery of the woods around Stratford, and at the same time recalls his boyhood dreams and the tricks of the school boys of the village on the "rude mechanicals," in the persons of Bottom the Weaver, Quince the Joiner and their companions, that I have always felt sure that this play represents the poetized reminiscences of his youth in Stratford. We can still see the bank whereon the wild thyme grows down Shottery way and other features of the setting of "Midsummer Night's Dream" may be pointed out.

"Romeo and Juliet" is very significant. Shakespere liked to take for the plot of his plays stories that were well known. In our time the great object of the dramatist seems to be to conceal the ending of the plot if possible until two minutes before the last curtain goes down. Shakespere had no such ambition and he never invented a plot. On the contrary he always took the popular novels and stories of his time and dramatized them; that is, put action into them and showed how the characters inevitably developed in the midst of the action. He took the story of "Romeo and Juliet" because it was one of the best liked novels of his time. In its popular form it had been written by Arthur Brooke about the year of Shakespere's birth. Arthur Brooke adapted the

story from the Italian and wrote a metrical romance on the theme as a sort of Protestant tract. In his preface he tells us how the story exhibits some of the worst evils of the Romish Church and above all the serious abuses that are sure to come from such institutions as auricular confession and superstitious friars.

I have before me as I write, Henry Morley's edition of "The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet," by Arthur Brooke, and in the preface of it occurs the following paragraph. If readers find in it some expressions that are a little stronger than we are accustomed to now, as well as certain words that are not usual in our time, they will recall that this is a quotation from an Elizabethan author and the leaving of the passages in the original wording will afford the best possible proof of how bitter Arthur Brooke was against the Church when he wrote his "Romeus and Juliet":

And to this end, good reader, is this tragical matter written to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers thralling themselves to dishonest desire, neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends, conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity), attempting all adventures of peril for the attaining of their wished lust, using auricular confession (the key of whoredom and treason) for furtherance of their purpose, abusing the honorable name of lawful marriage to cloak the shame of stolen contracts; finally, by all means of dishonest life, hastening to most unhappy death.

Of course, every one recognizes at once that this is not the moral of the "Romeo and Juliet" story as told by Shakespere. Indeed, exactly the opposite lesson might be drawn from his play. And yet commentators have pointed out that Shakespere follows Arthur Brooke's

version very closely. He has, however, changed the whole of the play's attitude toward the Catholic Church. Confession instead of being a source of sin actually protects the young people from their own passion in the most difficult circumstances, and almost succeeds in rescuing them from an unfortunate complication. Instead of being "superstitious" Friar Lawrence is pictured as a dear old man interested in his plants and what they can do for mankind, but interested still more in human souls, trying to care for them and quite willing to do everything that he can, even risking the displeasure of two noble houses rather than have the young people commit sin. Friar Lawrence is represented in general as one to whom Romeo and Juliet would naturally turn in their difficulty. His pleasant jesting with Romeo about his capriciousness is a charming human element and yet typical of the men of his kind.

In opposition to this very favorable attitude of mind that Shakespere made so clear in transforming "Romeo and Juliet" from a Protestant tract into what is really a Catholic apology for two institutions dear to the heart of the Old Church, and just then much attacked, some of those who have studied Shakespere's religion have emphasized the fact that "King John" represents an altogether different attitude. In that play they assert there are passages which make it very clear that Shakespere shares the general feeling of the men of England in his time. King John protests, for instance:

That no Italian priest
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions.
But as we, under heaven, are supreme head,
So under Him that great supremacy,
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,

Without the assistance of a mortal hand:
So tell the Pope, all reverence set apart
To him and his usurp'd authority.

King Philip: Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

King John: Though you and all the kings of Christendom
Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,
Dreading the curse that money may buy out;
And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,
Purchase corrupted pardon of a man
Who in that sale sells pardon for himself,
Though you and all the rest so grossly led
This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish,
Yet I alone, alone do me oppose
Against the Pope, and count his friends my foes.

In this play, too, there are some bitter comments on monks which would seem to prove that Shakespere shared the opinions of many of his contemporaries regarding monasticism. So modern writers maintain that the poet was too broad-minded to take part in the petty religious squabbles of his time, but as the humor suited him, or the exigencies of the drama demanded, took now one side and now the other. In "Romeo and Juliet" a much more effective play could be constructed by making the Friar a sympathetic character and using auricular confession as a means whereby the young folks were almost saved, but on the other hand in "King John" there was much more effective dramatic material in making that monarch spurn the papal authority and in bringing him to death through monkish intrigues. Hence they insist that no arguments about his religion can be based on these passages of Shakespere. As a great dramatist he is eminently objective and his writings represent his characters and not himself. Those who say this, however, have surely never taken the pains to look up the

original version of "King John" from which Shakespere took not only all the material for his play, but a great many of the modes of expression.

This old play of "King John," called in the original version, "The Troublesome Reign of King John," was probably written in the year of the Spanish Armada when English national feeling ran very high and there was bitter antagonism against Catholicism as the religion of England's greatest enemies. The dramatist—we are not quite sure who it was—shrewdly took advantage of this political situation in order to gain favor for his play. He tickled the ears of the groundlings and attracted popular attention by stimulating the prejudices of his audience. Shakespere modified all this to a very marked extent when he rewrote the play seven years later, though it can be seen that he used many of the words of the original version and was evidently following it very closely. But for some good reason he was manifestly minimizing all the anti-Catholic bias in it though letting stand whatever sentiments were suitable for such characters as King John and his *entourage*.

In the matter of monks and nuns and their treatment in the original version of "King John," Shakespere has been even more drastic in the changes that he made. Abuse of religious was very popular in London at this period. A great many of the people who supported the theater had been enriched at the time of the change of religion by the confiscation of the property of monks and nuns. Naturally a public sentiment justifying the pilage was created by circulating stories about the abuses in monasteries and convents. Historians are now agreed that there is little evidence of these alleged disorders. Some abuses there were, but not any more than have

always existed in any human institution. The vast majority of the monks and nuns were earnestly and unselfishly engaged in the same good works that they discharge now.

Shakespere, however, has no sympathy with this Protestant tradition regarding religious and constantly corrects it throughout his plays. The example from "Romeo and Juliet" has already been cited. His attitude of mind is even more striking in this regard in "Measure for Measure." In "King John" he has changed most of the bitter Protestant bigotry about monks and nuns into something with much less of an appeal to the vulgar, but which is much closer to the truth as he knew it. The original writer of "King John" put roysterous scenes of monkish hypocrisy on the stage for audiences to laugh at. But Shakespere eliminates these scenes and also leaves out ugly passages of innuendo about the monk's treason against the king and about their preparing poison for him. Though he allows the expression of Hubert to remain, *i. e.*: "The king I fear is poisoned by a monk," before this he has thrown doubt on the suspicion by making King John exclaim:

This fever that hath troubled me so long
Lies heavy on me; Oh my heart is sick!

thus preparing the mind for John's natural death.

From "Romeo and Juliet" and "King John," both written before he was thirty, it is clear, therefore, that Shakespere, who went up to London with the memory of his Catholic mother's example in his mind, was himself thoroughly Catholic in sympathy. He was not only not indifferent to religion, but he went out of his way in order to correct false impressions that were being spread

about the Church by other poets and dramatists. He had to do this carefully because it was literally as much as a man's life was worth to favor the Church openly or to show in any way that he was a Catholic. Shakespere might have found advancement at court, by joining in the chorus of abuse of Catholicism and by helping to form the Protestant tradition. Far from doing so, however, Shakespere always did the very opposite. Constantly and consistently he gave sympathetic pictures of monks and nuns, introduced the doctrine of purgatory into "Hamlet," and carefully avoided writing anything that was contrary to the Church's tenets, though a great many of his contemporaries went out of their way to do so whenever they could.

It could be argued, however, that the young poet who came up to the maelstrom of Elizabethan London, where disputes about religion were dangerous, might well have forgotten his early training, quite lost what Catholic faith he had, and ended by becoming totally indifferent about religious matters. It would not be surprising if he did. There are authors who insist that Shakespere exhibits just such indifference in his maturer writings. There would be very little use then arguing about the poet's Catholicism in his younger years if he abandoned the Faith afterwards, owing to unfortunate religious conditions which existed in London. If a mind so great as Shakespere's could not retain its faith in Catholicism, there must be something in that religion to which a keen intellect can not submit itself.

That argument is of little value for, after all, without opportunity to practice religion, faith is likely to grow dim, even where there is originally a strong conviction with regard to it. Not much experience is needed in

order to know that. But still in Shakespere's case I should be quite willing to accept the conclusion and if we found no further evidence than that of "Romeo and Juliet," "King John" and some of the work of his earlier years, I should be ready to agree that he had become quite indifferent in matters of religion, though I should of course regret that a great genius had been so unfavorably and unfortunately affected by his environment. Still the argument that he had lost his faith would be conclusive for me.

We have, however, what seems to me compelling evidence to the contrary. The last play that Shakespere wrote was "King Henry VIII." It is one of Shakespere's greatest plays. Some of the Wolsey speeches in it are the finest examples of English that were ever written. It is conceded by all the critics to be the ripest fruit of his mature years. Therefore, if a play can be considered the expression of Shakespere's settled opinion, that play is "Henry VIII." Now it so happens that the subject of "Henry VIII" is exactly the story of how the change of religion came about in England. There was a lustful king who wanted to put away an old but faithful queen in order to marry a younger woman. There was an ambitious cardinal whose intentions doubtless were good, but whose selfish aims led him to foster the king's unworthy design. Between these two the question of the divorce came up at Rome, was rejected by the Pope and then the obstinate Tudor monarch disgraced the cardinal, and in order to secure a divorce, made himself the head of the Church and changed the religion of England.

That is exactly the story that in "Henry VIII" Shakespere tells with a wealth of genius and a power of expression that has been unequaled since his age. James

Gairdner, who probably knew this period of English history in the documents better than any one in our time, once said that a man who wants a brief history of the reign of Henry VIII will find the best one in Shakespere.

The circumstances under which the play was written add to its significance. For many years he had not been producing historical dramas. All his writing in that line had practically been concluded before 1600. "Henry VIII" was not put upon the stage until nearly 1609 or 1610. Perhaps while Elizabeth was alive, Shakespere feared to tell the story as he himself saw it. If so he probably sketched the play and continued to work at it off and on during the intervening years. This may account for the perfection of its style and for the thoroughly finished character of the great speeches in it. But at the end of his London dramatic career, Shakespere was bidding farewell to the stage, so he finished "Henry VIII" and left as his last heritage to his country his absolute conclusions regarding the religious situation in England.

When Griffith's defence of Wolsey, for instance, is read, it becomes very clear that a Catholic is talking, and indeed it has since been found that this apology for the scheming cardinal is taken almost word for word from a passage about Wolsey by Blessed Edmund Campion. That Shakespere should have used this clearly shows his personal Catholic sympathies. The death of the martyred Campion had attracted wide attention in England, and more than anything else at that time had disturbed those who thought profoundly on religious matters. Seriously quoting Campion meant agreement with him regarding the change of religion in England. Any one who reads the passage which Shakespere had under his hand

will realize that the dramatist has deliberately borrowed it nearly word for word in Griffith's defence of Wolsey. Says Hollinshed:

This cardinal (as Edmund Campion in the "History of Ireland" describeth him) was a man undoubtedly born to honor. "I think," said he, "some prince's bastard, no butcher's son, exceeding wise, fair spoken, high minded, full of revenge, vicious of his body, lofty to his enemies, were they never so big, to those that accepted and sought his friendship wonderful courteous; a ripe schoolman, thrall to affections, brought abed with flattery, insatiable to get and more princely in bestowing, as appeareth by his two colleges at Ipswich and Oxenford, the one overthrown with his fall, the other unfinished, and as yet as it lieth, for an House of Students considering all the appurtenances incomparable through Christendom; a great preferrer of his servants and advancer of learning; stout in every quarrel; never happy till his overthrow, wherein he showed such moderation and ended so perfectly, that the hour of his death did him more honor than all the pomp of his life passed." Thus far Campion.

Any one who knows the conversation between Katherine and Griffith will recognize how Shakespere used all these expressions.

But in contravention of our interpretation of this play it is sometimes urged that the fifth act, with its culmination in the birth of Elizabeth, and the high prospects for England and the rejoicings which this occasions, indicates that the writer considered that the marriage of King Henry to Anne Boleyn and the birth of a daughter by that union marked a great epoch in English history and, above all, that the steps that led to this happy termination, though dramatically blameworthy, must be condoned owing to their happy consequences. It is well known, however, that the fifth act by every test known

to Shakesperean commentators was not written by Shakespere at all but by Fletcher. Its style compares very unfavorably with the magnificent four preceding acts, and in versification it differs completely. Indeed the fifth act by its Protestant tone demonstrates how differently the play of "Henry VIII" would have been written had it all come from the pen of Marlow, Fletcher or of the others who were bent on winning the favor of the court. Far from minimizing the evidence derived from Shakespere's "Henry VIII" this act only strengthens our position and shows that only a man of deep Catholic sympathies could have written the first four acts of the play.

It is often said that we know little of Shakespere and yet we know much more about him than the Baconians admit. Our knowledge, moreover, of his relations with people in London would indicate that a great many of his friends and intimates were Catholics. It is possible that the Burbages, the actors with whom he was so closely joined during most of his dramatic career, belonged to the Warwickshire Catholic family of that name. One of Shakespere's dearest friends, the Earl of Southampton, who was his patron in early years, and his supporter when he bought the Black Friar's theater, was closely allied to a Catholic family and, as Simpson has pointed out, was cradled in Catholic surroundings. Southampton's father, Henry, the second earl, was a well-known adherent of the Pope and a devoted supporter of Mary, Queen of Scots. When he died in 1581 he left a large legacy to be distributed among the poor of his estates on condition that they should pray for his soul and the souls of his ancestors, though prayers for the dead had, of course, been formally rejected by the

Anglican Church. Lady Southampton, moreover, the mother of Shakespere's friend, was the daughter of Lord Montague, an ardent Catholic who had suffered for the Faith.

It is true that Southampton himself, brought up under the guardianship of Lord Burleigh, was looked upon by the Government authorities as safely Protestant. Nevertheless this friend and patron of Shakespere was practically treated as one of the leaders of the Catholic party, and was considered the champion of their cause. Catholics met quietly in Southampton House, and oftentimes Mass was secretly celebrated there. Though it was not then the residence of the Earl of Southampton, the house's use by the Catholics was possible only because of his connivance.

When toward the end of her life Elizabeth became almost impossible as a ruler, the conspiracy of Essex was organized and the Catholics nearly to a man flocked to him. Essex was known to be in correspondence with the Pope and openly advocated religious toleration. Southampton was the close personal friend of Essex. It was to Shakespere that this party turned for a historical play that would serve the purpose of showing not only Londoners, but all the English who might be visiting London, how England had in the long ago gotten rid of an obnoxious ruler. So Shakespere's play of "Richard II" was put on the stage, but after a short time was suppressed for being treasonable. Lord Burleigh felt that some of the lines applied to his own policy, and Queen Elizabeth is said to have declared, "Know ye not I am Richard II?" The conspiracy, however, failed. Essex went to the block in 1600; Southampton was sent to the Tower and a number of Shakespere's friends, such as

Robert Catesby and William Green, John Wheeler and John Arden were all caught in Burleigh's net and had to suffer.

Shakespere as a mere dramatist was considered scarcely important enough for personal persecution, but his play was condemned and had to be taken off the boards. Surely all this gives one a good idea of Shakespere's intimate relations with Catholics in London.

When Elizabeth died Shakespere was the only one of the contemporary poets and dramatists who refused to pay tributes to the dead queen. When King James failed to keep his promises of providing religious toleration and the so-called Gunpowder Plot was unearthed by the Government in 1605, a number of Shakespere's friends and benefactors were again among those who were arrested.

The conversion of Ben Jonson about the middle of the last decade of the sixteenth century showed how easily men might be Catholics in London at this time. Ben Jonson was in the Marshalsea prison on a charge of murder in 1594 and found himself surrounded by priests who were accused of treason because of their refusal to take the oath of supremacy. By associating with them Jonson became a Catholic and when released from prison married a Catholic wife. His child was baptized Mary, and Shakespere was chosen as her sponsor. This choice of a godfather seems to indicate that Shakespere was a Catholic at this time, for in his ardor as a new convert, Ben Jonson would scarcely have selected an Anglican for that office.

We know very little that is definite about Shakespere himself, and the practice of his religion. We have, however, some information that is very interesting from the

conclusions that it suggests. As the result, for instance, of the examination of some thousands of documents in the Rolls Office, Professor Wallace of the University of Nebraska, unearthed Shakespere's name in connection with a lawsuit and from the documents found, it is clear that Shakespere lived with a Huguenot family during many years of his stay in London. The father of the family was a hairdresser and, as this was one of the trades not usually taken up by Englishmen, Huguenots who followed it were allowed to live in England and indeed were tempted to take up their residence there because they would be free to practise their religion unmolested. They were not required to go to the Anglican services under penalty of being fined heavily for recusancy, as were all the other families of England. It seems clear that Shakespere by his residence with the Huguenot family could thus avoid attending the Established Church. Indeed this would have been an easy way for him to escape the obligation of going to church. The details of the law process show, moreover, that Shakespere was practically adopted as a member of the family and consulted generally with regard to such matters as marriage dowries, and the like. I can not but think that this is significant evidence that Shakespere, while in London, so planned his life as to avoid attendance at Anglican services.

One more proof of Shakespere's Catholicism in conclusion: About the close of the seventeenth century Archdeacon Davies, who was a local historian and antiquarian in the neighboring county of Staffordshire, but who was well acquainted with Stratford and its history, and who could easily have had very definite sources of information, denied to us, declared that Shakespere "dyed a pa-

pist." It would have been perfectly possible, it must be remembered, for Archdeacon Davies to have spoken with people who knew Shakespere during the years that the poet spent in Stratford at the end of his life. After this review of the evidence I can not but conclude that Shakespere not only "dyed a papist," but also lived as one.

A GRIM FAIRY TALE

BY DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.

Mrs. Jeremias Tenement was suffering from a bad attack of nerves. A few weeks back, she would have called it "feeling all washed out." But she had lately discovered her nerves at the personal hygiene class in the Sweetness and Light Center, and the discovery had been epoch-making for the Tenement family.

"Is it nerves again?" queried the master of the house.

"It is," snapped Mrs. Tenement. "The ladies at the Center say I need rest."

"You might begin with your tongue," suggested her lord, whose eyes sometimes belied his meek mouth.

Mrs. Tenement's sense of humor was more than feminine. So she hurried on.

"I need rest and a change of point of view. That's what the ladies say. I should be interesting myself in the great world around me, helping to make it brighter and better. Them's their very words. I should be allowed to take my mind off my own narrow spear—sphere—and find recreation in doing good to others."

Mr. Tenement's retentive memory recalled two facts: first, that he was listening to that identical speech for the third time; and second, that he cherished an emphatic grudge against the Sweetness and Light Center. To begin with, it was non-sectarian, whatever that might be, and as Mr. Tenement put it, not his kind at all. Besides, he was just a bit weary of the endless quotations from Mrs. Mansion and her Center, used by Mrs. Tenement who belonged to the Hygiene Class; by Maggie, his eldest, who belonged to the Domestic Science Circle; by

Mike, who was a leader on the basketball squad; by Paul, Will and Bertie, who made paper futilities in the kindergarten, and by Henry who was occasionally loaned to the day nursery. Hence the oft-repeated complaint of Mrs. Tenement gave impetus to his cerebrations, for suddenly a smile wrinkled his sun-scorched face:

"'Tis rest and change you need, sure enough, and a chance to make your fellow-man better. Then why not take 'em all in to-day? Visit your Mrs. Mansion." Mr. Tenement scowled momentarily, as he recalled how she had referred to him as a "specimen." "Ask her how she lives. That'll be a change for you. Give her some tips on how to raise her children; you've got four more than she. Find out if she goes to church regular, and if she says her prayers. 'Tis only fair, I say, to make some return for the intrust she's been takin' in us."

Mrs. Mansion was just finishing a paragraph in her new book, descriptive of the life of the denizens of McAvoy flats, and the self-sacrificing efforts of the wealthy to bring some culture into their lives, when the maid entered.

"Didn't I tell you that I could not see any one?" snapped the advocate of sweetness and light. "I am busy now and have no time——"

The heavy curtains parted and Mrs. Tenement bobbed into the room. Her smile would have gone straight to the heart of an iceberg.

"Forgive me for intruding upon your labors," she said in a tone perfectly imitative of Mrs. Mansion's "sociological voice," "but I could not resist the temptation to drop in. Tell me, how are you getting along?"

Before the astonished Mrs. Mansion could find breath to utter the thoughts that surged within her the phonograph continued:

"You know, I am so interested in the housing of the rich. One must have recreation and a change of point of view, and mine is doing good to others."

"Mrs. Tenement," began the astonished Mrs. Mansion, and her voice made one think of reindeer bells clinking over deserts of snow, "this is quite too much——"

"Not at all," interrupted her vocal counterpart, using expressions that rang familiar. "I enjoy it; it's a real pleasure. Besides"—and here Mrs. Tenement wore her own personality for a moment—"you told us at the Center to seek rest and a change of atmosphere and a chance to make the world better and brighter. So my man said, since you was always so interested in us, I ought to stop in and do something for you."

Mrs. Mansion reached faintly for something that was not there. Her smelling-salts, perhaps.

"Now this is a very nice room, so bright and cheery; but I don't like the way it's furnished. If I might suggest, them curtains is too heavy; they gather dust and dust is bad for the lungs. I learned that in the household class. Beautiful and useful; them's the qualities the teacher in the art class said everything should have. And these here chairs ain't exactly what you'd call comfortable. Have things comfortable, Mrs. Mansion, so that your old man will come to love his home, and won't——"

A generous application of smelling-salts had revived, partly, Mrs. Mansion's stunned senses. Her teeth chattered after a manner which one might deem menacing.

"Why, what's the matter? I thought you'd like me to make suggestions. I wasn't put out when you said horrid things about our wax fruit and the plush sofa. Be sweet and cheery. And how's the little ones?"

Mrs. Mansion's hand was reaching wildly for the bell, but it paused, in mid-air, as Mrs. Tenement leaned forward in her chair, and in a hoarse whisper asked:

"It ain't really true that you let a hired girl look after 'em? You do? Well, believe me, Mrs. Mansion, and I've got six of my own, no hired girl can take care of 'em right. They're always thinking about some feller or other, and goodness only knows when the baby's due to fall into the kitchen stove. And children will play in the kitchen."

"Have you come here with the express purpose of insulting me?" Mrs. Mansion's tone was an uncertain blend of hysteria, indignation and tears. She had met her match, a woman who could out-talk her. Waterloo seemed near.

"Why, no. But I thought a few pointers would make you brighter and better. There should be contact between the upper and the lower classes. That's what you told us. By the way, do you go to Mass regular?"

"Mass! Are you mad?"

"Well, of course, that's a sensitive point," soothed Mrs. Tenement. "Still, when a person hasn't been going to church, some friend ought to speak to her. Really, you ought to go to church. Your home would be happier, your children better cared for——"

Mrs. Mansion's hand had found the bell.

"Anne, show this woman to the door."

Mrs. Tenement's form grew suddenly limp.

"Why, Mrs. Mansion, you ain't really huffed, are you?"

The volume of Mrs. Mansion's eloquence flung itself at the defenceless intruder. "In all my life I have never seen such unblushing impertinence. To invade my house

unasked, to criticize the style of my furniture and appointments, to tell me how my children shall be reared, to pass slighting comments on my husband and, most of all, to trifle with my religion, is an impudence I had not deemed even possible. Woman, leave my house as quickly as you can."

Mrs. Tenement's dumpy little figure stiffened with something of real dignity. When she spoke it was not with the strange blending of Mrs. Mansion's personality, but with all the force of her own honest soul.

"Oh, then, it is really a matter of a point of view. When you come to my house, without so much as 'by your leave,' make nasty remarks about my furniture, put foolish ideas into my children's heads, teach me to make dishes when I haven't the money to buy the stuff that goes into them, call my husband a specimen and say things that ain't true about my Church, that's sociology. But when I do the same to you, it's just impertinence. Maybe there's a difference but, somehow, it's mighty hard to see. I'm going, Mrs. Mansion, but what you said about me is true of you, too. Me and my man and my children ain't like a bunch of animals for you and your kind to look over and study, and our flat ain't a zoo where you can come and take a morning off."

Mrs. Tenement was unwontedly silent that evening. She seemed to have forgotten that she had nerves. But when Mr. Tenement came home, she said in an audible whisper to Maggie, the eldest: "Go out to the woodshed and get Pa's plush sofa. He'll be wantin' it when he smokes his pipe after supper."

And Mr. Tenement, after supper, reclining on the restored plush sofa, winked a long, satisfied wink. He had done a good day's work.

EUPHEMIA

BY FRANCIS P. DONNELLY, S.J.

Euphemia is a country whose discovery dates back before the dawn of history. The Greeks named the land and sent large colonies to it. The geographical boundaries have never been clearly settled. South of Euphemia lies a very thickly populated nation called Mendacia. The Euphemists are such great friends and allies of the Mendacians that they have not gone to the trouble of surveying their respective territories, or of establishing definite boundaries. To the north, however, is the land of Sinceria, not at all friendly to its southern neighbors and sharply divided from Euphemia in landscape and climate. Euphemia is a land of shady valleys and heavy mists, whereas Sinceria is a bracing, mountainous country, swept bright by stiff winds.

The first point a traveler would notice in Euphemia would be the silence of all the children. They may occasionally be seen, but never heard. The *enfant terrible* is either gagged to silence or packed off to school amid the hills of Sinceria, until the period of self-consciousness dawns. This custom was first introduced when the King of Euphemia was paying a visit to one of his subjects. A particularly well-behaved child said to him, making a pretty courtesy: "Your majesty is a wonderful man." "Why do you say that?" asked the charmed King. "Because mamma told me to," replied the child, who was rushed off that very night to a boarding-school in Sinceria.

The stranger would notice one odd fashion of Euphemia: its partiality for the color white. For furs the

Euphemists favor sheep's clothing. Everything in Euphemia is kept white-washed, and as no weather-proof enamel has been as yet invented there, the process of applying new coats of white, when the former application is soiled or scaling off, has to be continually carried on. For this reason most of the inhabitants know something of the art. All the sepulchers even are whitened. It should, however, be noted that the Euphemists themselves never employ the terms, grave or sepulcher. They refer to the ultimate-resting place and the ancestral mausoleum. An exception to the prevailing color-scheme of mother-of-pearl, which is Euphemistic for white, is found in a substance once styled rouge, but now known as rose-talcum. The rose-talcum is worn over the universal smile that is a national trait of the Euphemists. An inhabitant, since ostracized, likened the smile to patent-leather or vaseline.

The language of Euphemia is especially worthy of note. The merchants are skilful in its use; the lawyers and doctors are more expert still in Euphemistic, but if a stranger wishes to hear the language spoken in its purity, he must mingle in the first society of Euphemia. He will note that perfection when his car stops at the porte-cochère. The attendants at the entrance will inform him of the unavoidable absence or most delighted presence of the occupants of the mansion. "Houses" are obsolete in Euphemistic. He will receive missives, or even epistles, couched in the exquisite vocabulary of regrettable previous engagements, or of supreme felicitations. Should he finally succeed in gaining admission into the inner circle, he will notice that sin and vice are vulgar terms. At times, however, the white-wash has an unhappy propensity for flaking off, and the once ornate nomenclature,

as in the case of "saloon," must be replaced in turn by "restaurant," "café," "cabaret," and "cafeteria." Euphemia is sensitive to any lack of respectability. Euthanasia and kleptomania are well-known substitutes for sordid terms. People in Euphemia are "frank," "daring," or, perhaps, "indiscreet." They incline to new thought, esotericism and cosmic affinities, and by this and similar parlance, especially by incompatibility of temperament, they gracefully drape over a multitude of sins—hush!—the term they used is not sins but foibles, or better, atavistic tendencies.

It was one of the famous heroes of Euphemia who reduced the practice of cleaning the outside to a fine art when he rid himself of cowardice, injustice and brutal murder, by the simple process of washing his hands. It was the same Euphemist who asked, "What is truth?" Euphemia has never heard the answer.



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